

Snacks, sunshine, sweet sounds

By Clint Wolf News Editor | Posted: Saturday, May 28, 2016 10:00 am

BELOIT — Although the weather forecast was not promising, the rain held off for the first Fridays in the Park event of the summer season.

Crowds gathered at First National Bank Plaza to soak up sunshine, good music and good food in downtown Beloit.

Although rain was threatening Friday, the sun was shining for the noon-time event, and judging from the crowds gathered at the corner of State Street and Grand Avenue, no one was worried about rain.

“The radar shows clear skies,” said Shauna El-Amin, executive director of the Downtown Beloit Association.

People taking time out for their lunch break and other residents enjoyed the music of the Beloit Memorial High School Jazz Orchestra during the initial event of the season. The student musicians had an eventful year, having earned several honors for their performances, and having recently returned from their appearance at the Essentially Ellington competition in New York.

The event drew old friends as well as new visitors to the First National Bank Plaza.

Vanessa LaBoy lives in downtown Beloit, but Friday was her first time at Fridays in the Park.

“I was home and I heard music, so I came down to see what was going on,” she said.

She called her husband to tell him about it, and that it would be going on each Friday during the summer.

Fridays in the Park will feature a local restaurant and musical entertainment nearly every Friday through Sept. 2. On Friday, the Flying Pig provided the food.

“We have something great going on every week,” El-Amin said of Fridays in the Park. “And we will have a survey component on the DBA Facebook page so people can tell us what they like and what



Mood music for summer

Clint Wolf/Beloit Daily News
The Beloit Memorial High School Jazz Orchestra performs during the first Fridays in the Park event held at First National Bank Plaza in downtown Beloit Friday. Each Friday this summer music and food will be served in an outdoor setting for the lunchtime crowds.

they don't like.”

Joel Otto was relaxing in a folding chair as he listened to the student musicians play. He thought the band was great, but he admitted to a little bit of a bias.

“My daughters in the jazz band, and it's the last chance to hear them this year,” Otto said.

His daughter, Marissa, plays piano with the BMHS Jazz Orchestra, and he accompanied the students when they were in New York for the Essentially Ellington competition.

He said the Fridays in the Park event was a good opportunity to get outside and enjoy the summer weather while enjoying the music and good friends.

“It's a nice crowd, a beautiful venue and a nice relaxing lunch,” Otto said.

The upcoming schedule for Fridays in the Park is as follows:

- June 3 — Music by Late Harvest. Food by Bagels & More.
- June 10 — Music by Stateline Playboys. Food by Grand Avenue Pub.
- June 17 — Music by Gary The Band. Food by Merrill & Houston's Steak Joint.
- June 24 — Music by the Steve Doiel Trio. Food by La Casa Grande.
- July 1 — Music by the Harlan Jefferson Trio. Food by the Brass Rail.
- July 8 — Music by the Bluegrass Reunion Band. Food by Suds O'Hanahan's.
- July 15 — Music by The Brothers Quinn. Food by Bagels & More.
- July 22 — Music by Blue Lightning. Food by Domenico's Italian Restaurant.
- July 29 — Music by The Stateline Playboys. Food by the Grand Avenue Pub.
- Aug. 5 — Music by The Lone Canary. Food by Merrill & Houston's Steak Joint.
- Aug. 12 — Music by The Harlan Jefferson Trio. Food by La Casa Grande.
- Aug. 19 — Music by Gary the Band. Food by Domenico's Italian Restaurant.
- Aug. 26 — Music by Jazz Tet. Food by Suds O'Hanahan's.
- Sept. 2 — Music by Sweetland. Food by the Brass Rail.